

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are in this application.

The Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 1-4, 6-8, 9-12, 14 and 15 over Rodriguez and claims 5 and 13 over Rodriguez in view of Panepinto. This is respectfully traversed.

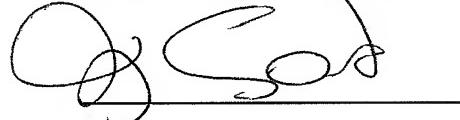
Based on the discussion held with the Examiner on November 11, 2008, claim 1 has been amended to define treating a raw hide or skin with a solution consisting of not less than 300% w/v of saline water containing 11000 to 30000 ppm of chlorides in the presence of not less than 0.04% w/v of salt of an alkali metal or alkaline earth metal. Claim 10 has been amended to "comprising soaking the raw hide or skin of step (i) in a solution consisting of saline water having a salinity of more than 25000 ppm in the presence of a salt of an alkali metal or alkaline earth metal before the hide/skin is treated with the alkali in step (ii), wherein the hide or skin is soaked in step (i) in not less than 300% w/v of the saline water in the presence of not less than 0.04 w/v of the salt of the alkali metal or alkaline earth metal."

The Examiner states on page 4 of the Office Action that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use 11000 to 30000 ppm chlorides and at least 0.04% because Rodriguez teaches pre-treatment baths with both components, and the percentages would just require optimization, which only requires routine skill in the art. Applicants respectfully disagree that Rodriguez would lead to the claimed invention. One of skill in the art given the teaching of Rodriguez that the sodium chloride should be at least 0.25% would not have a reasonable expectation of success that a lower percentage of sodium chloride could be used, with no upper limit. Furthermore, the examples of Rodriguez all show that a higher percentage of sodium chloride is used.

Therefore, there is no combination of the cited references that makes the claims as amended obvious, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

It is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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